

Henry Maddock House (Duck's Nest)
561 North Lake Trail
Palm Beach
Palm Beach County
Florida

HABS No. FLA-220

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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20243

HENRY MADDOCK HOUSE (Duck's Nest)

Location: 561 North Lake Trail, Palm Beach, Palm Beach County, Florida.

Present Owner: Paul Maddock, 545 North Lake Trail, Palm Beach.

Present Occupant: Ex-Governor Claude R. Kirk.

Present Use: Rental property.

Significance: This house is probably the earliest existing building in Palm Beach, and also a fine example of the early prefabricated construction, as the expression of the modular construction of the earliest portions of the house is intact.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1891.
2. Architect: The building was possibly prefabricated by the Long Island Portable Housing Co., Brooklyn, New York.
3. Original and subsequent owners: Henry Maddock, a retired English potter who had been the American Agent for John Maddock and Sons, Limited, of Staffordshire, England.

In 1941, Paul Maddock, the grandson of Henry Maddock, restored the house, after it had been abandoned in 1925 for sixteen years.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Henry Maddock built the Duck's Nest in 1891 from two prefabricated houses he had sent from New York via the Jacksonville, Tampa, and Key West Railroad to Titusville, after which it was shipped by the Indian River Steamboat Company to the head of the Jupiter and Lake Worth Railroad at Jupiter, and down the line to Juno. It was known as the "Celestial Railroad," local history has it. From Juno the material was again shipped by water down the lake to the Duck's Nest.
5. Original plan and construction: The structure was actually two buildings which were placed parallel to each other, forming another room between them, and comprising fifteen rooms altogether. A porch was added running along the north and east, with a second porch on the south side, built without a raised floor. A north service wing was added. The structure was built with a cistern under the house.
6. Alterations and additions: The second floor over the south porch was added in the 1920s.

The whole building was restored after 1941 by Paul Maddock. The foundations, which were of Australian pine, had rotted. The building was raised two steps and a brick foundation added. The porch roof slope was then found to be obstructing the view of the lake so the bases of the columns were also increased. The south porch was recently glazed. The interior has been extensively reworked. No major parts were removed, but everything has been refinished.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

The name of "Duck's Nest" for Henry Maddock's house on Lake Worth was derived from the extensive inland fresh-water marsh and pond area east of the building (since filled in) which supported large groups of nesting ducks.

The first settler on Lake Worth settled on the same spot of land as that occupied by the Henry Maddock house. He was a man named Lang, who escaped the Confederate Army Draft by settling on Lake Worth during the Civil War. In the fall of 1866, Michael Sears and son George sailed up the coast from Biscayne Bay to the Indian River settlements. On the way up they noticed no inlets on the Lake Worth shore area, but on the return trip a few weeks later they found an inlet about 10 miles south of Jupiter. They sailed into the lake and to the Lang cabin. Lang was surprised to learn that the war was over. A few days later Land and his wife moved back to Ten Mile Creek, a tributary of the St. Lucie River.

The second settler on this site on Lake Worth was Charlie Moore, an old sailor. He settled on the same land that Lang had lived on and in the Lang house. Moore sailed up from Miami in the sloop "Cruiser" in 1872. Moore was rapidly followed by several more families, and in 1873 Christmas was celebrated with a large dinner at Moore's place. This included all the settlers on the lake, then numbering less than twenty.

In 1875 Moore married the widow Wilder, and her two grown children moved in with them. Moore was one of the more important settlers in the area for some time.

One of the other original settlers was Henry Maddock, the retired English potter. It was he who built the Duck's Nest, from two prefabricated houses he had shipped in. [See Builder, contractor and suppliers.]

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old Views: An important 1897 photograph appears reproduced in Palm Beach Life, March 27, 1956.

2. Bibliography:

a. Secondary and published sources:

Carron, Louis. "First in Palm Beach," Tequesta, The Journal of the Historical Association of Southern Florida. Ed., Charton W. Tabeau, Vol. XXV, 1965.

Palm Beach Life, America's Oldest Society Journal. Ed. Kathryn Robinette. Palm Beach: Palm Beach Newspapers, Inc., March 27, 1956.

Pierce, Charles W. Pioneer Life in South East Florida. Ed. by Donald Walter Curl. Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1970.

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Summer 1971

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Architectural character of the Henry Maddock house lies in the fact that its construction date, 1891, is the earliest date for any building in Palm Beach, and that it is an example of a successful prefabricated construction and subsequent adaptation to the period of the 1940s.
2. Condition of fabric: After several years of vacancy and neglect, the present owner, a descendant of the original owner, began restoring the house in 1941, and has kept it in good repair since that time.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Prefabricated units are 1-1/2 story, joined by a one-story center. Enclosed south porch is full two stories. The shape is irregular. Other dimensions not recorded.
2. Foundations: The original pine stump foundations were replaced by brick piers when the house was raised an additional riser above ground after 1941.

3. Wall construction, finish and color: The original walls are modular, prefabricated panels, approximately 3'-2" x 8'-5" above the 7" sill. The panels are comprised of 3'-5" vertical tongue-and-groove, vee-joint boards. Joints are covered by molded convex battens. Window widths are controlled by the same module. The two separated prefabricated units which were joined lengthwise to form the original house are defined by wood quoins, 11" x 9" and 15" x 9". Gables are shingled in fish-tail design below wood louvers and flush tongue-and-groove boards. The latter are incised with a sunburst design. A false gable, concealing the joining of the two units, projects in front of the plane of the actual gables. It is finished with flush boards which are decorated with a curlicue design of hemp rope including the figures, "91". Walls of the two-story wings are also shingled in the fishtail pattern. All walls and trim are painted white.
4. Structural system, framing: According to the owner's carpenter, joists and rafters are rough sawn and numbered for placement.
5. Porches, stoops, terraces: The entrance porch from Lake Trail, a bicycle path on the west, extends around the north side of the house. The four bays on the west front are defined by slender turned wood columns, approximately 12'-0" on center. The columns are original, but have been raised approximately 20" by a 3" plinth and a 17" square block. The original pitch of the shed roof has thus been changed. The floor is brick in a herringbone pattern on grade, extending at the entrance bay to a small terrace. Inset tile squares in earth tones decorated with fleur-de-lis are used at the outer corners of the terrace. A plain 1" scroll-shaped bracket at the top of the columns support the plain perimeter beam on which the exposed ceiling rafters rest. The ceiling deck is edge- and center-beaded 5" boards. A balustraded wood stoop of four risers leads from the porch floor up to the front door. The newels are turned wood, terminating in a plain uncarved pineapple. On the northwest corner of the house is a flat-roofed curving wood passageway which connects the house to the service building. At the main entrance doorway on the east there is a brick-paved terrace. The enclosed and storied porch on the south of the house extends the front forward and creates a three-faced pavilion effect.
6. Chimneys: There are three brick chimneys painted white.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance door on the west wall is framed into a completely glazed wall system at the junction of the two prefabricated units. On each side of the door, 2" mullions and muntins divide the wall into a pattern consisting of two lower panels, 20" and 22", the wider panel being located adjacent to the door.

Above these are panels, 27-1/2" wide x 47" high, adjacent to the door, and 17" x 27" at the outside. The transom panels, 17" high, correspond to the widths of the panels below as well as the door jambs. The wood door consists of an upper clear glazed light surrounded by a pattern of 3-1/2" colored glass squares, set in 1" wide muntins. Below the glazing are two vertical panels trimmed in a richly profiled molding.

At the end of the north porch is a similar glazed door of different dimensions. The clear panel is 13-1/2" x 30" with the surrounding colored glass set in a pattern of 3-1/2" x 6-1/2" rectangles. The 7" deep rail between the glazing and the two vertical panels below contains a single incised groove. The panels are trimmed with fluted half-rounds applied to the door. At the angles, molding consists of square blocks with concentric circles in relief. On each side of the door is a window, 10" above the door sill and 10" below the door head. Two vertical clear glass lights, 10" x 24" are surrounded on the exterior edges only by colored glass squares and rectangles. Trim around the door-window ensemble is plain.

Similar glazing appears in French doors on the south wall of the house, leading to the presently enclosed porch (with its exterior effect of a two-storied pavilion). Two clear, vertical door lights, 13" x 24", are surrounded by colored glass. Below is a single plain wood panel.

Modern plate-glass double doors lead from the enclosed south porch to the east exterior.

An entrance doorway on the east wall of the original house consists of French doors, four lights, 11" x 22", over two vertical panels.

The kitchen door on the east wall consists of a sliding glazed panel of six, 9" x 9" lights, which lowers in a track behind the two vertical wood panels.

- b. Windows and shutters: The majority of the windows are of wood, double-hung. On the west wall they are one-over-one, 27" x 30", and on the north wall, flanking the fireplace, one-over-one, and 20" x 30". Kitchen windows and the majority of the second-floor windows are six-over-six lights, 10" x 14". At the stair landing, the window is six-over-six lights, 8" x 12". On the east wall, the first floor, there are casements, six lights, 10" x 14" each. Casements on the second floor are three lights, 20" x 24" each. Second-floor windows over the enclosed south porch are double-hung, one-over-one, 30" x 36".

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The gabled roofs are covered with wood shakes, with the peaks terminating in turned wood finials. Most of the enclosed south porch has a large gable roof, but the three-faced west facade has hipped roofing.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Cornice trim is small-scaled, simple molding. Scalloped bargeboards trim the gables and the eaves of the west porch.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: The west end of the two-story covered porch addition on the south is three-sided, and creates the exterior effect of a pavilion.

C. Description of the Interior:

1. Floor plans: The one-story foyer-living room at the junction of the two prefabricated story-and-a-half units is ell-shaped, and extends through from east to west and across the southwest corner, with the stairway on the east wall of the extension. At the south-east corner is a small den behind the stairwall.

North of the central room is a guest room, behind which, on the east, is a bar, which gives access to the dining room on the north. Adjacent to this are the kitchen, utility room, and stairway to the north unit. All bedrooms and baths are on the second levels of the two separated one-and-a-half-story units.

- a. First floor: In the foyer-living room the floor and the 18 risers in the stairway to the second floor, south wing, are carpeted. The two lower treads of the stairway are elliptical. The rectangular newel has vertical beading in the center. Balusters are simply turned and painted white. The molded handrail is varnished. The stair-wall is painted plaster at the first level, and beaded vertical tongue-and-groove at the second level. Shallow molded beams compartmentalize the ceiling as well as express a cornice. The in-fill is acoustical tile. Interior doors are either single six-paneled or double three-paneled wood. Door and window trim are beaded combined with circular medallions at the angles. The fireplace is at a 45° angle diagonal at the southwest corner. It appears to have been remodeled, faced with natural-finish wood paneling, and a border of glazed tile at the opening. The hearth is of marble.

In the den the floor is carpeted. Walls and ceiling are papered in a raffia-texture paper. Base and crown molds are simple. Doors and trim at openings are similar to those of the living room, except that a modern wood-louvered door leads to the south porch.

The guest-room finishes are similar to those in the den, but the raffia-textured wallpaper is not used here.

The bar room floor is of cork tile. Walls and ceiling are of paneled wood, with simple base and crown molds. A scalloped board, similar to exterior bargeboards, is applied below the crown mold. The built-in bar, at a 45° angle in the north-east corner, is paneled, with similar bargeboard design applied, and a formica counter top.

In the dining room the floors are carpeted. Walls are papered and ceilings plastered. The fireplace is painted wood with brick trim at the opening. The wood mantel is supported by two brackets. Hearth is quarry tile.

The kitchen and breakfast room floors are of asphalt tile. Walls, except for some papered areas, and ceilings, are painted plaster. The formerly open stairway has recently been enclosed by a plastered wall.

The south porch, formerly only screened, is now enclosed. The first floor is divided into two levels. The floor of the east end, elevated four risers above the floor of the west end, is paved with concrete pavers. The west end is carpeted. Decorative glazed tiles are inset in the concrete pavers. The white-painted north wall is flush tongue-and-groove boards between two wood pilasters with chamfered edges.

South, east, and west walls are large arched openings glazed with plate glass. In the center of the south wall is a white-painted brick fireplace with an arched opening and a green terrazzo cantilevered hearth above a wood cabinet. Two ceiling fans supplement two window air-conditioner units.

- b. Second floor: In the north service wing there are three small second-floor bedrooms with similar details and a bath. Floors are carpeted. Walls are plastered as is one bedroom ceiling. Other ceilings are beaded tongue-and-groove. Base and crown molds are simple. Doors are two-paneled wood.

The southwest wing has two second-floor bedrooms. The southwest bedroom floor is carpeted, its walls and ceiling beaded tongue-and-groove, with crown mold and cornice. Four-paneled hall doorway has a four-light transom. The fireplace is faced with beaded tongue-and-groove boards and glazed tiles at the opening. The mantel with dentil trim returns around the chimney breast. The hearth is of glazed tile.

The southeast bedroom has a 9" wood parquet border on the now carpeted hardwood floor. Walls and ceiling are painted plaster, with simple baseboard and a coved cornice, trimmed at top and bottom with beaded molding.

Applied moldings simulate paneling on the wood doors. Door and window trim is beaded with square medallions at the angles. The oriel window on the east wall is trimmed with an arched valence and boxed sides, enclosing a built-in vanity in the deep sill.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house lies between Lake Trail on the west, and Lake Way on the east. The south and north boundaries of the property are enclosed with a modern chain-link fence, screened by a dense growth of palm, hibiscus, and other tropical plants. There is a low white picket fence between the St. Augustine lawn and Lake Trail. On the east, tall natural growth screens the property from the Lake Way public road upon which the driveway enters. South of this asphalt driveway is the swimming pool and enclosed gazebo, screened by high hedges. The driveway leads to a graveled circular turn-around, from which circular brick steps lead to the entrance terrace east of the house.
2. Outbuildings: There is a one-story service building connected to the northeast corner of the house by a flat-roofed curved porch. The sides of this building are shingled.

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PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project to survey the historic architecture of Palm Beach, Florida, and to emphasize written historical and architectural data and historic district studies was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the Historical Society of Palm Beach County and the Florida Board of Archives and History in the summer of 1971. Under the direction of James C. Massey, then Chief of HABS, the project was carried out in the Historic American Buildings Survey field office in the Flagler Museum, Whitehall Way, Palm Beach, with Professor Woodrow W. Wilkins, AIA (University of Miami) Project Supervisor; Richard C. Crisson, Architect (University of Florida); Richard High, Student Architect (Georgia Institute of Technology); and Bryan Bowman, Student Historian (University of Florida). Under the general direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS from March 1972, additional documentation was prepared, and archival photographs for the project were taken in April of 1972 by Jack E. Boucher, HABS photographer. Editing and final preparation of the documentation was carried out in 1980 in the HABS Washington office by Lucy Pope Wheeler of the HABS professional staff.